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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 06 DILI 000300

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
USUN FOR GORDON OLSON AND RICHARD MCCURRY
USPACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD

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SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR SITREP FOR JUNE 8, 2006

REF: A) DILI 299; B) DILI 293

DILI 00000300 001.2 OF 006

CLASSIFIED BY: Grover Joseph Rees, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Dili, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

- ¶1. (SBU) Summary
- GNR restricted to barracks after confrontation with Australian forces;
 - Provisional cooperation agreement reached between JTF and Portuguese forces;
 - Armed group claims Alkatiri gave them weapons to kill opponents;
 - Foreign Defense Attaches invited to participate in FDTL weapons inventory;
 - Fretilin Party office in Ermera reportedly burned;
 - New Minister of the Interior stood up by PNTL commanders from the East;
 - EmbOff meetings with demonstration organizers in Maliana;
 - Western border districts remain quiet and isolated;
 - Dili and district courts begin to function with minimal staffing;
 - UNHCR working with GOET and local NGOs to improve conditions in IDP camps;
 - Security.
- End Summary.

GNR restricted to barracks after confrontation with Australian forces

- ¶2. (C) On Wednesday afternoon, Portuguese paramilitary police (GNR) officers arrested three youth who were fighting and threatening to burn homes in one of Dili's violence-prone suburbs. The GNR transported these detainees to a temporary

detention center staffed by Australian soldiers. Citing concerns that the GNR had not respected the procedure jointly developed by the GOET and the JTF on arrests and detentions, the Australian soldiers refused to accept the detainees. When GNR officers insisted that the agreement between the GOET and the GOP accorded them such a status, the Australian soldiers reportedly attempted to disarm the GNR officers. The GNR resisted and returned to their headquarters, detaining the youth in their compound until they were transferred to a Timorese jail 24 hours later. According to a Portuguese Embassy source, news of this incident reached Lisbon quickly and the GNR commanders in Dili received instructions that all GNR officers were to remain in their barracks until further notice.

Provisional cooperation agreement reached between JTF and Portuguese forces

13. (C) Despite this emotionally charged incident --- or perhaps in part because of it --- the Portuguese GNR now appear willing to cooperate more closely with the JTF forces. President Gusmao, Prime Minister Alkatiri, and Foreign/Defense Minister Ramos-Horta met this morning, in part to discuss the confrontation between the two international forces. (A report on this meeting will follow septel.) Minister Ramos-Horta then held a meeting attended by the Defense Attaches and Ambassadors of the four countries contributing troops to the peacekeeping effort. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss an arrangement for co-operation between the Joint Task Force (JTF) and GNR commanders. The Portuguese DCM reported that a provisional agreement had been signed but was pending approval from Lisbon. Portuguese and Australian sources have reported that the agreement establishes a two-step cooperation plan. Initially, the GNR will be given exclusive patrol in the Comoro area of the city, with possible deployment to other areas in the city during daylight hours under an arrangement to be determined between the GNR and JTF. (Note: In the end, the acceptance of a specific geographical sector rather than a city-wide mandate was the result of a direct GOET request to GNR rather than

DILI 00000300 002.2 OF 006

negotiations between GNR and JTF; nevertheless, the result was the arrangement that had been proposed by JTF.) Upon the establishment of an international police force in the coming weeks, the GNR would become the rapid response force for riots and other large-scale civil disturbances. In the agreement, the GNR accepted the need to abide by the JTF procedures for arrests and detentions that have been meticulously drafted to comply with Timorese law. The GNR will become fully operational tomorrow when the bulk of its weapons and vehicles arrive from Portugal.

14. (C) During a lengthy discussion of the incident with EmbOff, the Portuguese DCM made explicitly clear to EmbOff that Portuguese forces would never be under the command of the JTF and that the new agreement would only enhance communication and cooperation. Interestingly, the Portuguese diplomat stated repeatedly that the Australians are merely a "visiting [not occupying] force" and must respect the autonomy of foreign troops not under their command. She reiterated that the GNR was here at the explicit request of the GOET and answered only to the President and Prime Minister. She concluded by stating that Australia has been a good neighbor to East Timor, but that Australians must understand the "special role" Portugal plays in the newly independent country. She cited what she described as an outpouring of popular support for the GNR upon their very public arrival in East Timor and characterized them as "saviors".

Armed group says Alkatiri gave them guns to kill opponents

15. (C) The Australian television network ABC today reported on a journalist's meeting with a group of 30 men who claimed they had been recruited by Alkatiri and former Minister of the Interior Rogerio Lobato to intimidate and kill political opponents in the lead-up to the 2007 elections. The men said they had met with Alkatiri personally and had been told to kill

the ex-FDTL "petitioners" as well as opposition leaders and "anyone who breaks the Fretilin rules." The leader of the group was an ex-Falintil fighter called "Railos" who had relayed a similar story to Emboffs during a visit to Liquica last weekend.

Railos told Emboffs that a representative of Lobato came to him with 18 long-barreled weapons and an assignment to use them to eliminate political opponents as necessary. He said that he had then taken the weapons to the President and relayed the story. He showed Emboffs a pistol he was carrying with him that he said was given to him by police at the President's house when he delivered the 18 weapons. According to the ABC account, however, the men have not yet turned their weapons over to the President but say they are willing to do so. The television story says the men are also seeking protection from international forces. Emboffs are investigating this and similar reports and will report further as details become available.

Foreign Defense Attaches invited to participate in FDTL Weapons inventory

16. (SBU) In fulfilment of one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Defense under President Gusmao's new national security plan, Minister Ramos-Horta will conduct an inventory tomorrow of FDTL weapons in military installations in Baucau, Metinaro, Hera, and Tasitolu. Ramos-Horta will be accompanied by senior FDTL officers, UN officials, and the defense attaches from foreign embassies. The weapons inventory will be compared with a written inventory recently delivered to the President by Brigadier General Tuar Matan Ruak.

17. (SBU) Assuming that the written inventory provided by General Matan Ruak is a complete and accurate list of all the weapons formerly possessed by FDTL, the physical inventory should reveal how many FDTL weapons are still at large. The

DILI 00000300 003.2 OF 006

probable possessors of such weapons fall into two categories. The first category consists of small groups of FDTL dissidents led by Majors Reinado, Tara, and Tilman, who fled to the western districts with their military weapons during early May. The second group consists of a substantially larger number of civilians from the eastern part of the country --- FDTL leaders have reportedly begun referring to them as "reservists" --- to whom these leaders gave weapons during the fighting in Dili in late May. The President's security plan charges FDTL and the Ministry of Defense with recovering all weapons that were given to what the plan calls "the so-called reservists." Embassy has received reports that some of those who were given FDTL weapons, including the erratic ex-guerrilla "L4", have been asked to return them, but there are credible reports that many of the "reservists" are still in Dili and still in possession of the weapons. Tomorrow's inventory should be at least a first step toward assess the scope of this problem.

18. (C) An advisor to Defense Minister Ramos-Horta, Janelle Saffin, told Emboff today that she had been present at the Minister's recent meetings with dissident members and ex-members of FDTL. Contrary to reports received by the Embassy from UN sources that these dissidents would not engage in dialogue with GOET leaders until Prime Minister Alkatiri resigns or is dismissed, Ms. Saffin was adamant that, while their agreement to participate in a dialogue with the President and "other" GOET officials was vague, all sides had indeed agreed to talks in the near future. Once the FDTL inventory has been completed, Ramos-Horta will again approach the various dissident leaders in an attempt to establish a timetable for dialogue.

New Minister of the Interior stood up by PNTL commanders from the East

¶9. (C) Minister of the Interior Alcino Barris called today for a meeting in Dili of all 13 national police (PNTL) district commanders to assess the current state of PNTL activities in the districts. Reports from the UN and PNTL indicate that initially all 13 commanders agreed to attend. In the end, however, only the commanders from the ten "Loromonu" (western) districts attended. When the Minister attempted to contact the commanders from Baucau, Viqueque and Lautem districts, their phones were reportedly switched off. It was also reported that Deputy Police Commissioner for Administration Lino Saldanha, who defected two weeks ago during the fighting between FDTL and PNTL and is staying at the FDTL compound in Metinaro, declined to attend the meeting.

EmbOff Meetings with demonstration organizers in Maliana

¶10. (SBU) EmbOff and USDR today traveled to Maliana, in Bobonaro district near East Timor's western border, to follow up on the demonstrations that took place in Dili on June 6 involving approximately 1500 people from Bobonaro and other western areas. District police reported that the demonstrators had kept them informed of their planned departure from Bobonaro and coordinated with them concerning security arrangements. The police reported that the demonstrators from Maliana, which contributed the largest number, had been organized by a newly-formed commission made up of political party leaders and ex-Falintil fighters. The leader of the Maliana commission is a former FDTL soldier known as "Deker" who was dismissed over a year ago and has since affiliated himself with the Democratic Party (PD), East Timor's largest opposition party.

¶11. (SBU) Poloff and USDR then arranged a meeting with Deker, who was accompanied by approximately 15 members of the commission. Deker explained that the group included leaders of various political parties, including Fretilin; former Falintil fighters; and community leaders. He also said the commission was receiving advice from the Church in Maliana. Two Timorese

DILI 00000300 004.2 OF 006

leaders of a community forum organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) who reside in Maliana were also there as members of the commission. Deker described the June 6 demonstration as "just the first step" in their campaign. They are currently waiting for the President's response to the petition they presented to him during the demonstration. If their demands (including the resignation or dismissal of the Prime Minister) are not met soon, they plan to organize much larger demonstrations. They characterized June 6 as just a testing of the waters. When asked whether their movement was limited to the western districts, they emphasized that they are focused on national unity and are in communication with several political party leaders from the East. However, all the districts they mentioned in which there are commissions such as theirs are in the West.

Western border district remains quiet and isolated

¶12. (SBU) District police in Maliana appeared to be operating normally during an unannounced visit by Emboffs today. However, they reported that their usual logistical problems, including insufficient vehicles to carry out regular police work, have been exacerbated by the current lack of logistical support from Dili. Emboffs also spoke to border police (BPU) both in Maliana and at a nearby border post who shared similar complaints regarding lack of support from Dili over the last two weeks. They are particularly hard hit as they are dependent on food supplies being delivered to their remote posts. Nonetheless, the BPU also appeared to be operating as usual. They reported that the border with Indonesia remains closed by order of the Indonesian government, and that the border has been mostly quiet in recent weeks.

¶13. (SBU) Life in the town of Maliana as a whole also appeared to be normal. Stores and restaurants were open and the market was lively. Electricity is intermittent, which is the norm for

Maliana. Government services such as the police, schools, hospital, and sanitation are operating normally but all other government offices are reported to be closed. There are concerns that between the lack of goods coming from Dili and the closed border with Indonesia, Maliana and the entire border area will soon face serious hardship. Prices for basic commodities have already risen significantly.

Fretilin Party Office in Ermera reportedly burned

¶14. (U) According to an announcement by a prominent Fretilin leader in Dili, the Fretilin Party headquarters for Ermera District in the town of Gleno was looted and burned by youth gangs today. The announcement was made by Francisco "Lu'Olo" Guterres, President of the National Parliament and also President of Fretilin. Assuming Lu'Olo's account is accurate, this incident represents only the second major act of violence outside of the capital since incidents civil unrest began more than a month ago. The other incident outside Dili, an attack on a government building that resulted in the death of a police officer, was also in Gleno. Foreign media reports stated that gunfire was heard in the streets of Gleno. In a subsequent phone conversation with Lieutenant Gastao Salsinha, the Gleno-based leader of the petitioners, EmbOff was assured that no such attack had taken place. UN sources also report that the Fretilin district leader's house may have been stoned, but they could not confirm that any buildings had been burned or any gunshots fired. Further developments will be reported septel.

Dili and district courts begin to function with minimal staffing

¶15. (C) EmbOff met today with a UN-funded international judge and with President of the Court of Appeals Claudio Ximenes to discuss the current state of the Timorese judicial system. Both interlocutors reported that after several weeks in which no

DILI 00000300 005.2 OF 006

cases were heard, the courts were beginning to use the newly sworn-in Timorese judges (see Ref B) and the three remaining international judges to conduct 72-hour hearings for recently arrestees and to resume cases still on the court docket. The Court of Appeals building has been ransacked and Dili District Court is still not considered sufficiently secure to conduct trials, so the international judges have assembled ad hoc "court teams" to go to conduct detention hearings at JTF and other detention sites. Reports indicate that approximately 8 such hearings have taken place. International and Timorese judges were also visiting district courts in Oecussi and Baucau to resume hearings in those districts. Judge Ximenes indicated that it would be preferable to continue having UN-funded judges in the post-UNOTIL mission to work in the courts as mentors and to hear cases. Several Timorese judges are reportedly still living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and have not yet reported back to report to work. Concerning the investigations underway into the actions of the FDTL on April 28 and May 25, Judge Ximenes stated that while Timorese law states that military courts should be established to try F-FDTL officers, in the absence of such courts the district courts could hear military cases.

UNHCR working with GOET and local NGOs to improve conditions in IDP camps

¶16. (SBU) UNHCR Regional and Country Representatives briefed EmbOff on their agency's plan to work in coordination with the GOET to establish new camps for those IDPs suffering from long-term displacement due to the destruction of homes or serious security threats. In addition, in response to an appeal from the Ministry of Labor to improve the situation in the current IDP camps, UNHCR is assisting the existing camps in reorganizing and is outfitting them with better facilities and supplies. To date, four planeloads of UNHCR supplies have

arrived in Dili and this afternoon a Boeing 747 filled with tents, blankets, tarps, and other non-perishable supplies arrived in Darwin, Australia and will be transferred to Dili. These supplies will provide adequate longer term shelter for at least 15,000 IDPs. The selection process to identify candidates to move to any new camps will be coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and the international NGOs assigned to each camp.

¶17. (SBU) The biggest concern expressed by UNHCR officials and by NGOs involved in the relief effort is the question of having visible, permanently assigned security forces at the larger camps. Although JTF forces responded quickly overnight to an attack on an IDP camp by a youth gang, those working on the IDP crisis have repeatedly stated that a visible presence of foreign soldiers or police outside the camps would greatly ease tensions within the camps and would likely serve as an effective deterrent against attacks. Another priority is the provision of protective services by NGOs and GOET agencies. Although the IDP camps are generally far more peaceful than other parts of Dili, there have been reports of crimes including at least one rape. Organizations including UNICEF are coordinating with local NGOs to begin providing protective services in the camps.

¶18. (SBU) When questioned about possible steps to encourage IDPs to return home, UNHCR representatives said it is essential that an international police force be established as soon as possible and that such a force conduct extensive community policing to create an atmosphere of security in Dili's neighborhoods. The officials cited UNHCR's program to convince refugees from the 1999 violence to return home from West Timor, in which initial socialization meetings were held between refugees and others from their home villages. These meetings were then followed by UNHCR supervised visits back to the areas from which people fled to provide them with a clear understanding of the improved security situation. During a meeting with EmbOff, First Lady Kirsty Sword Gusmao stated that several NGOs, including the Alola Foundation which she established, are concentrating on issues specific to women in

DILI 00000300 006.2 OF 006

IDP camps.

Security

¶19. (SBU) EmbOffs and international aid workers continue to have access to all areas of the capital necessary to carry out diplomatic work and to address the IDP crisis. The few checkpoints maintained by international forces do not hinder movement. A reduced number of arson attacks continue, but only in the most disfranchised and historically violent neighborhoods.

¶20. (C) Embassy DCM and RSO met with Australian DCM today to discuss a possible formal arrangement between the Embassy and the JTF to provide protection to the Embassy should it come under attack. The Australian DCM stated that he did not see any obstacles to such an agreement, but that it would likely need to be negotiated back in Canberra. Ambassador Rees subsequently discussed the issue with the Australian Ambassador, who gave assurances that the JTF would respond as quickly as possible to a call for help at the U.S. Embassy or any other diplomatic mission. However, she said an estimate of likely response time and other details should be discussed directly with JTF representatives. Emboffs and/or USDOD representatives at Embassy Dili hope to engage in such discussions tomorrow morning.

¶21. (SBU) The number of American citizens remained at 57.
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